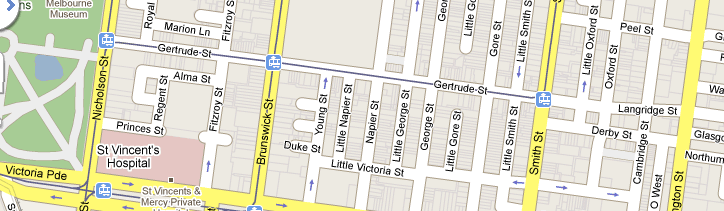
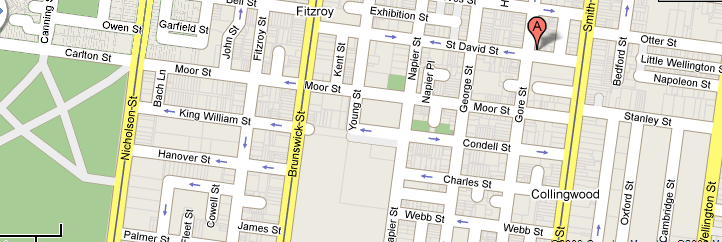
**Fitzroy Indigenous Trail – focusing on Community, Social and Political Action**

**Journey through Fitzroy: Doug’s Church to the Moreton Bay Fig**



The lanes of Fitzroy have been most notably documented in the song, *Charcoal Lane,* by Archie Roach. In an interview in 1999, Roach explained that many of the lanes had been blocked off or fenced off, to provide additional car-park space. Roach also noted that the perception of the wider community of the life of the "parkies" is often not related to the reality. He observed that:

*‘There was more to it than drinking. If people just saw it on the outside, you know, they'd just think, oh, a couple of old Aboriginal fellows, or young Aboriginals, couple of Aboriginal people drinking in a pack, or whatever, vacant lot, vacant area - but it was more than that. That's where I learned my history brother, from those areas, because all the old fellas, they knew more about me than I did, mate.* **Archie Roach Interview, 19 February 1999**

The community of the "parkies" was integral for the maintenance of community links and confirming the history of those people who were often ignored or rejected by mainstream society. The shared body of knowledge of the "old fellas", as Archie Roach called them, was important for confirming identity and belonging.

**Reflect:**

**Find a Tree or Laneway to stop and sit in. Take a photo of your team relaxing. Ask each team member to share a story or interesting fact about themselves with the group.**

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| **Discover:**  **Visit the following sites along Gore Street and Gertrude Street:**   * **258 Gore Street** * **211 Gertrude Street** * **184-186 Gertrude Street** * **66 George Street** * **136 Gertrude Street** * **120 Gertrude Street** * **79 Gertrude Street** * **43 Gertrude Street**   **Take a photo of each site.   Write notes on the following aspects of each site:**   * **Describe what the building is used for today.** * **Describe what the building was used for in the past. Hint: look for a plaque.** * **List the names of any important people associated with this site.** * **Explain what the significance of this site is to the Fitzroy Indigenous Community.** |

**Meet at the Moreton Bay Fig Tree**

*‘We're on the corner of Gertrude Street and Nicholson Street and we're just outside the old tram shed. Opposite there's a Moreton Bay Fig tree. Can you see it there? That big tree? In fact there's two and that's where the Aboriginal community, both before the war and when the war was on, would come and meet. As I said before, there were no organisations and there was no Advancement League. You couldn't fit into anyone's house because every family only had a little room in the house. It could be three or four families in one house. So on Saturday and Sunday, and during the week, but mostly weekends, everybody would come here and sit around these Moreton Bay Fig Trees. That was our meeting place in the late 30s and 40s and maybe early 50s.*

**Alick Jackomos, *Remembering Aboriginal Fitzroy*, p24.**

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| **Discuss:   Based on your observations, ideas, as well as the lyrics to *Charcoal Lane*, discuss how lanes, trees and parks, helped maintain the Indigenous community in the 20th Century?  Record your conversation or take notes.** |

**Sir Doug Nicholls and Lady Gladys Nicholls Bronze Statue in Parliamentary Reserve**

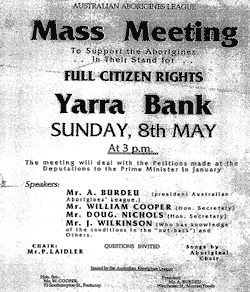
Pastor Sir Doug and Lady Gladys Nicholls were leaders within the Indigenous Community of Melbourne. Their statues were made and positioned in Parliamentary Reserve in 2007.

**Sketching:**

**Sketch part of the statue.**

**What stands out about this piece of art? How is it different or similar to other statues you have seen?**

**Speakers Corner on the Yarra bank**

In the early days of the Australian Aboriginal League, Pastor Doug Nicholls, and other Aboriginal leaders, would go to the Yarra Bank on a Sunday to argue for rights for Aboriginal people. They argued for citizenship rights, representation in parliament and assistance for Aboriginal communities.   
  
 

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| **Speak your mind:**  **Listen to the words of Doug Nicholls, before sharing your own points of view with the crowd.** |

**Post Trail Homework:**

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| **Research:** |
| Research the life of a prominent Indigenous leader that you learnt about on the trail |
| * Write a brief biography outlining their birthplace, family, interests, occupation and contribution to society. |
| * Why is this person an example of a *good citizen* do you think? |
| Research one of the Aboriginal Organisations you learnt about on the trail: |
| * Where is/was it located (address)? |
| * What does it look like? Include a photo. |
| * Why was it established? |
| * What were/are its aims? |
| * Is it still operating? It not, why not? |
| * How has this organisation contributed to the Fitzroy and Indigenous communities? |

**Some resources to use as a starting point:**

<http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Community/Aboriginal%20affairs/Snap.asp>

<http://indigenousrights.net.au/default.asp>

<http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00001b.htm>

<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/indexb.html>

<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/heroes/nicholls.html>

**Reflective questions:**

What did you discover on the Fitzroy Indigenous Trail?

What sort of Community was the Fitzroy Indigenous community?

Is Melbourne (Fitzroy) a liveable city for Indigenous people?

**Meet at the Moreton Bay Fig Tree**

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**Alick Jackomos, *Remembering Aboriginal Fitzroy*, p24.**

**Batman’s Treaty:**

In July 2004, an important discovery was made by workers clearing undergrowth and willow trees from the banks of the Merri Creek. A 45 square centimetre concrete block was found. The top of the white painted block has four upright bolts and a coating of glue which indicates it had been used as a base for a plaque.

‘In times gone by, the Northcote Council knew a plaque had been placed on the banks of the Merri Creek but after many searches in the 1950s and 1960s they were unable to locate it.’ Rex Harcourt, local historian.

The plaque site is located beside the creek, near the end of Cunningham Street, Northcote. It is a short distance upstream and on the opposite side of Merri Creek, from Rushall Railway Station.

**Challenge:   
  
Can you locate this historic site?**

